

HISTORY
OF
METHODISM
IN
AMBLESIDE.

BY
MYLES HOLMES.

*"A little one shall become a thousand, and a small
one a strong nation, I the Lord will hasten
it in his time."*

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P R E F A C E .

The great interest my dear departed sister took in the Methodist society at Ambleside ; the great benefits that I have received personally through it, and because the society was first formed soon after my sister was born, are amongst the principal reasons that prompted me to write this brief sketch of the history of Methodism in Ambleside.

Perhaps all my readers may not agree with all that I have written, but I have given my candid opinion (unbiased by any prejudice) on the various subjects that came under consideration. I very willingly give to those who may differ from me the right to think for themselves, and I also claim the same privilege for myself.

I need scarcely add that I was connected with the Sunday school and society previous to my removal, and since that time I have been a keen observer of the workings of the society at Ambleside.

My thanks are due and are here presented to all the kind friends who have so willingly supplied me with information.

If this simple sketch be the means of stimulating anyone to greater activity in the cause of Christ, the writer will feel amply rewarded, and God shall have all the praise.

M. H. .

Ellesmere-street, Farnworth,
July, 1873.

METHODIST was a name given to certain polemic doctors in France and other countries for their peculiar method of defending Popery against Protestants; afterwards it was given by way of derision to the followers of the late Rev. John Wesley.

Methodism took its rise in the University of Oxford. The strictness of Mr. Wesley's religious profession and principles attracted considerable notice at college, and he succeeded in forming a small religious association, among the members of which were Hervey, the author of "The Meditations," and the celebrated George Whitfield. This little band of pious youths drew upon them the ridicule of their fellow students, and they received the name of Methodists. Little were they aware whereunto this would grow,—that he who was at the head of these few, and who was styled a religious fanatic, should be the means of arousing the united kingdom from centre to circumference, and be the instrument in the hands of God of bringing about a revival of religion which stands unrivaled in the annals of the Christian Church since the days of the Apostles.

When we look at the state of the country at the time the Wesleys began their wonderful career we shall come to the conclusion that such a revival of religion was very much needed, the land from one end to the other was filled with violence; the state of morals was very low, profligacy and vice everywhere prevailed; and according to the Essayists the moral virtues of the nation were at their last gasp. "There is no such thing as religion in

England," wrote Montesquieu, who visited England in seventeen hundred and thirty. "If anyone speaks about religion everybody begins to laugh." The churches of the land resembled, to a great extent the vision of the valley full of dry bones, "Behold there were very many in the open valley, and lo they were very dry." Prelates of the establishment and leading ministers among the dissenting communities were lamenting that religion was dying out in the world; that Christianity was openly proclaimed to be a "cunningly devised" fable, and no longer worthy of serious regard or enquiry. "The Angelican Church," says a living writer, "Had become an ecclesiastical system under which the people of England had lapsed into heathenism, or a state hardly to be distinguished from it. Nonconformity was rapidly in course to be found no where but in books; Evangelistic enterprise had died out; and the little experimental religion which remained was mostly confined within the limits of a few godly households."* Such was the state of the country at the time Wesley began his noble work of travelling through the united kingdom, exclaiming "The world is my parish." His theme was salvation by faith; his aim to spread scriptural holiness through the land. And in the prosecution of this noble work he was subjected to dangers by sea and by land; he suffered much by the merciless hand of the brutal mob, which was very often headed by the clergyman of the parish or a civil magistrate. But none of these things moved him, neither counted he his life dear unto him. He feared no frowns, courted no smiles, but steadily

* Mother of the Wesleys, by the Rev John Kirk.

and constantly kept his aim in view for above fifty years; and was the means of doing an amount of good surpassed by none, and equalled by few. St. Paul's experience given in the Second Epistle of Corinthians, 11th chapter, from the 26th to the 28th verse, may be very aptly applied to Mr. Wesley: "In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." The following vivid sketch of the founder of Methodism is taken from the Rev. William Morley Punshon's lecture on "Wesley and his times." "We can only refer in the shortest possible way to his further trials and successes at Oxford; his mission to Georgia, with its manifold trials and disappointments; his intercourse and controversies with the Moravians; the blessed change in his religious experience which laid the foundation of his subsequent extensive usefulness the formation of the Methodist societies, and the manner in which under his fostering care and skilful government they grew up into beautiful and flourishing churches. The violent persecution which he endured from brutal mobs; his itinerant journeyings, in which he travelled nearly five thousand miles, and preached a thousand sermons for fifty-two years in succession; and his marvellous industry which enabled him amidst all these rapid movements to conduct extensive correspondence, deal with cases of conscience, write or abridge two

hundred volumes, keep himself abreast of the literature of the times, maintain his classical studies and manage the whole concern of a complicated and wide-spread church organisation, declaring meanwhile that he had no time to be in a hurry, that he never felt low-spirited for a quarter of an hour in his life, or never lost a night's sleep until his seventieth, year, and that ten thousand cares sat as lightly upon his mind as ten thousand hairs upon his head. With similar brevity must be named his genial temper—warm, but not fiery, and radiant with religious joyfulness; his clear and strong intellect, his playful humour and sparkling wit, his unselfish benevolence bounded only by the length of his purse, the wonderful power of his preaching, under which thousands wept and prayed in crowded meeting houses or bleak mountain sides or in open market-places, his genuine philanthropy and patriotism, his intelligent and ardent piety, his noble Catholicity of spirit, and his unrivalled conversational powers, which charmed the most cultivated minds of his day, and made him the ever welcome guest of humbler households; and the choicest companion of little children. John Howard blest his loving words, and under their inspiration went forth to his prison journeyings with greater heart than ever. Bishop Louth sat at his feet and hoped he might be found there in another world; and Alexander Knox, kindled with raptures as he recalled the fine old man with a child's heart and a seraphic face, realising his own idea of angelic goodness. He pursued his Apostolic toils until the 2nd of March, seventeen hundred and ninety-one; when, having served his generation by the will of God, he passed to his reward exclaiming, "The best of all is God is with

us;" leaving a reformed nation and a flourishing church, numbering one hundred and fifty thousand members, five hundred and fifty ministers, and thousands of local preachers as his best and most endearing monument. "I consider him," wrote Southey to Wilberforce, "As the most influential mind of the last century,—the man who will have produced the greatest effects centuries or perhaps millenniums hence if the present race of men should continue so long." Even Macauley affirms that "Wesley was the instrument of a most remarkable moral revolution, whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have rendered him eminent in literature; whose genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu; and who, whatever his errors may have been, devoted all his powers in defiance of obliquity and derision, to what he sincerely considered the highest good of his species." The haven of his labours is still working in the world; and during the eighty-one years since his death, hundreds of thousands have been converted and transplanted to heaven through the instrumentality of the community which he formed. And there are in connection with the Wesleyan society in various parts of the world at the present time not less than fifteen thousand ministers, about thirty thousand local preachers, and about two and a half millions of members, three hundred and fifty thousand Sunday school scholars; and including its various offshoots after a careful calculation made a short time ago, the numbers are greatly enlarged, the number of members being three millions four hundred and thirty-eight thousand and thirty-three; and the number of adherents thirteen millions seven hundred and fifty-two thousand one hundred and thirty-two. When we look at these

figures do we not see a literal fulfilment of prophecy "A little one shall become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation," and exclaim "What hath God wrought." Let us join in the earnest prayer "That righteousness may soon cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; that the kingdoms of this world may soon become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ; when he shall reign from sea to sea, from the river, even unto the ends of the world."

From all that dwell below the skies
Let the Creator's praise arise :
Let the Redeemer's name be sung,
Through every land, by every tongue.

Eternal are thy mercies, Lord ;
Eternal truth attends thy word :
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,
Till suns shall rise and set no more.

Your lofty themes, ye mortals, bring ;
In songs of praise divinely sing ;
The great salvation loud proclaim,
And shout for joy the Saviour's name.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow ;
Praise him, all creatures here below !
Praise him above, ye heavenly host ;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost !

The Rev. John Wesley visited Ambleside nine times. His first visit being on the twelfth of April, seventeen hundred and fifty-one; his second on the tenth of April, seventeen hundred and fifty-three. Of this visit he thus writes, "We breakfasted at Ambleside, where our landlord appeared quite open to conviction. We spoke plainly to him, and left him full of good desires and thankfulness." His third visit was on the twenty-third of May, seventeen hundred and fifty-seven; his fourth on the fourteenth of April, seventeen

hundred and sixty-eight; his fifth on the ninth of April, seventeen hundred and seventy; his sixth on the tenth of April, seventeen hundred and seventy-two; his seventh on the fourth of May, seventeen hundred and seventy-four; his eighth on the twenty-fifth of May, seventeen hundred and eighty-one; and his ninth on the nineteenth of April, seventeen hundred and eighty-four; of which he gives the following account: "I went on to Ambleside, when as I was sitting down to supper I was informed notice had been given of my preaching and that the congregation was waiting. I would not disappoint them, but preached immediately on 'Salvation by Faith'." I have often been told that Mr. Wesley preached in a large room at the Salutation Hotel, but of this there is no mention in his published journals. However that he did preach is certain, whether it was in the open air or in the room already referred to is of no moment. But the people of Ambleside eighty-eight years ago had preached unto them "Salvation by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." Mr. Wesley does not say whether there was any society formed in Ambleside, or that there were any souls saved under his preaching. If this was the case the society soon broke up, and those who might be converted kept their religion to themselves, and it soon died out; because for nearly sixty years after Mr. Wesley's last recorded visit the people seemed to have lived in utter disregard of religion, and the description that we have given of England morally and religiously at the time Mr. Wesley began his labours might be applied to Ambleside. At the time of which we write pastor and people were, to use a Methodist expression, "fast asleep;" and those who appeared to be religious are truly

portrayed by Wesley in the following lines—

A goodly, formal saint
 I long appeared in sight :
 By self and Satan taught to paint
 My tomb, my nature, white.
 The Pharasee within
 Still undisturb'd remain'd ;
 The strong man, arm'd with guilt of sin,
 Safe in his palace reign'd.

But a change was about to take place in the religious history of Ambleside. Hitherto the Established Church had held undisputed sway in the place. No other sect entered the field until about the year eighteen hundred and eighty-seven or eight, when a gentleman named Coombs entered this great moral wilderness; and from the account we have heard of him he was as "A light which shineth in a dark place." He was a Nonconformist minister, belonging to the Independents, and was also a gentleman of means, and on that account would have many followers. Loaves and fishes had and still have great attraction. The writer remembers an old woman asking him if the Methodists gave rolls* at their chapel, and on being answered in the negative she said she would go if they did. But followers of this class are always a drag on any society. Mr. Coombs resided at Belle Vue, a mansion on the higher side of the town. He converted one of the large rooms into a preaching room, and there every Sabbath held public services, which were well attended. Several of the tradesmen joined him, and he was considered by all to be a very acceptable preacher,

* It was the custom to give rolls of bread on the Sabbath to poor people in the Parish Church.

and he was doubtless the means of doing a great amount of good, for he not only preached himself and visited the inhabitants but employed others as well. This good work, however, met with great opposition. The greater part of the inhabitants not liking this new sort of religion, and thinking it a sin to worship God anywhere but in a consecrated building, they requested the clergyman of the parish to interfere and try to stop such proceedings. But he very wisely answered them as Gamaliel answered the men of Israel who were bent on doing the Apostles mischief: "And now I say, refrain from these men and let them alone, for if this council or this work be of men it will come to nought, but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest happily ye be found even to fight against God." Mr. Coombs continued to hold services at his residence for over two years; when, after some difficulty, land was secured and a plain chapel built on the Rydal Road about the year eighteen hundred and forty, in which regular services were held by Mr. Coombs and those who assisted him for five years. About the year eighteen hundred and forty-five Mr. Coombs left Ambleside, but continued to support a minister for two years longer. When he thought it desirable to form an organised church the majority of his adherents then deserted him,—they would come so far but no further. Mr. Coombs then decided on selling the chapel, alleging as his reason that he had no one to help him. He thought the Methodists were the most likely to have it, as they could carry the work on at the least expense, so he sold it to them for four hundred pounds, giving them back twenty pounds as a subscription. This must have been a very great sacrifice, for it

originally cost eleven hundred pounds. We must apologise for this somewhat lengthy digression, but we wished to give an account of the origin of the chapel the Methodists now worship in.

In eighteen hundred and forty-two Mrs. Parks came with a family from Kent as cook or housekeeper to Wanlass House, Waterhead, near Ambleside. On her arrival she asked if there were any Methodists in Ambleside, and was informed that there was no society, but that there was one person who attended the Independent Chapel, who was said to be a Methodist, of the name of Mary Brown, housemaid to a lady near Waterhead. One of the workmen at Wanlass House, a member of the Independent Chapel, gave Mrs. Parks a religious tract, and invited her to attend the chapel on the Sabbath. She accepted the invitation, and was introduced to Mary Brown, who was a member of the Methodist society at Penrith. They frequently met together for religious conversation. After a time one or two other Wesleyans came to reside at Ambleside, and they formed a class, which was led by William Tyson. Amongst this number was William Creighton, the founder of Methodism in Ambleside. He was a native of the place, but removed when quite young to Santon, in Cumberland, to learn the trade of a gardener. He was of humble origin, and his father was a rigid Churchman, but his mother was a person of more liberal views, as she frequently attended the services held by Mr. Coombs in his house. Their son knew nothing of true religion when he left home, but while he was at Santon a revival of religion broke out, and he was one amongst a number who were converted. The change of heart which he then experienced was evidenced by a change of life.

This news was communicated to his parents at Ambleside, who were quite alarmed at the thought of their son being converted among the Methodists, the idea being prevalent then that the Methodists were all wrong in their heads. They remarked on first hearing of his conversion "Worse and worse; if it had been a scrape that he had got into they would gladly have helped him out; but this getting converted was awful to think about." And to make matters worse he was coming home, and come home he did. The writer has often been amused when he has heard the old man tell in his own quaint way what he thought of his son at that time; many an incident might be told that would amuse the reader. He began to work in good earnest as soon as he came home. He was not ashamed of his religion, but took up his cross and let his light shine before men. God had done great things for him, whereof he was glad, and his language was to all "Come and I will tell you what the Lord hath done for my soul." If my youthful readers will learn a lesson which is very needful for young people (older ones as well) connected with our church to learn that when they remove from the place where they have been converted, they will at once join themselves with the people of God, it will save them from many a bitter pang of conscience. The idea is a very dangerous one that we can keep our religion to ourselves. Scores have tried it, and have miserably failed. They went on well for a while, but they soon began to show marks of declension, and the work thus begun goes on silently but surely until all religious impressions are gone; and when once fallen in this way it is almost impossible to reclaim them. Many a one has confessed on their

death-bed that this was the beginning of their downward career. To keep yourself aloof from the Church of Christ with the idea that you can keep your religion to yourself is but an insinuation of the evil one, and is attended with serious consequences. Young people beware !

William Creighton, who was now only in his eighteenth year, soon gathered a few around him, and a society class was formed, which was led by one Mr. William Tyson, as before stated, William Creighton often assisting him in this work when not away preaching. He also commenced preaching in his father's house, though his parents were very much opposed to Methodism, yet to their honour be it spoken, they never refused their son the free use of their house. Regular services were held on the Sundays, prayer meetings, &c., on the week evenings. In this good work he was assisted by one or two others. This small band of noble men did not confine their labours to Ambleside alone, but had regular services at Troutbeck Bridge and Wray, two villages about three miles from Ambleside. A society class was also formed at Troutbeck Bridge, and during the time the railway from Oxenholme to Windermere was being constructed the Rev. Mr. Armitage, a clergyman of the Church of England, rented a room for worship, chiefly for the benefit of the excavators or navvies. When Mr. Armitage gave up the room the Wesleyans took it, and conducted services in it for some time; but at the present time the Wesleyans have no services at neither of the two places mentioned, for reasons with which we are not acquainted they were given up. But Methodism at Ambleside got fairly established, and they were very soon after joined to the Kendal circuit,

the Revs. James Dunbar and Matthew Salt being the ministers at that time. In the founder of Methodism at Ambleside we have another proof that God's way of working is quite different to that of men,—He works by whom he will work; sends by whom he will send. When God has a great work to do He very frequently uses the most unlikely instrument to perform that work. Various instances have we of this in the Word of God. That "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence." This passage of Sacred Writ was beautifully illustrated in the life and character of William Creighton. He was a man of no literary attainments,—had none of this world's goods, having to work for the bread that perisheth. But God laid hold of him by his spirit; and having an indomitable will, he by the help of God achieved wonders. He was a man of much prayer. I have been told by his wife that during the whole of their married life he never prayed less than seven times a day. He knew wherein his strength lay; he had power with God and prevailed. The tide of persecution ran high; many a scoff and sneer had these noble-minded men to take, besides other provocations when assembled for worship, such as the house door being fastened so that they were unable to open it from the inside, and ladders or such like ponderous things set against the door, that on its being opened they fell in, very often endangering the life of those who opened the door. But they heeded them not, they were determined to live it

down; and when the most provoking things were done they offered no resistance, they had made up their minds not to offer railing for railing. But in spite of every opposition the good work went on slowly but surely; the increase was small, but it was real, for those who joined them were truly converted and were sure to stand. The good work thus begun went on in this way for three years, when the poor despised Methodists began to think about having a chapel of their own in which they could worship God. Many an earnest prayer did these holy men offer to God that he would open a way for them; their faith was strong, they felt sure that they would have a chapel of their own. About this time the late Rev. William Lockwood Thornton and the Rev. John Rattenbury were at Ambleside on a visit. Mr. Thornton administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the few members of society in the humble cottage. Both these godly ministers encouraged them to be faithful, and advised them to continue to make their requests known to God by prayer and supplication, who would open a way for them. This meeting is still remembered by those who are living and who were present as being a time long to be remembered,—a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Mr. Rattenbury, accompanied by Wm. Creighton, walked over to Rydal, and as they were returning and came near to the then Independent Chapel, William Creighton remarked that he never prayed without asking the Lord to give them a chapel of their own; and added, whenever I pray this chapel always comes up before my mind. Mr. Rattenbury said, "Pray on brother, and you will get it;" and so it proved, as we have before stated, Mr. Coombs was desirous of selling the chapel.

and thought the Methodists were the most likely to have it for the reason already given ; and the Methodists bought it for the price stated. When we remark that the society was very poor and not very numerous, there being only nineteen members of society, and to buy a place and give three hundred and eighty pounds for it was a bold undertaking ; but they had faith in God. Eighty pounds was contributed by the society and friends, and two gentlemen came forward and advanced the remainder of the money ; and it was after some difficulty secured to the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. In the month of November eighteen hundred and forty-seven, the chapel was opened for Divine Service, according to the rites of the Wesleyan Methodists, by the Rev. William Moister. The Revs. William Huddleston and Edward Baylis were the ministers stationed in the Kendal circuit at that time. There was a good staff of local preachers, so that the pulpit was always well supplied ; and for the first fourteen years after they got the chapel they were mostly dependant on the local preachers, the travelling ministers only visiting the place once a month. Ambleside being the extreme north end of the circuit many of the local preachers had to walk from six to twelve miles on the Sunday morning to preach ; yet though they were dependant on a class of men that had had no college education nor had been ordained by any Bishop, yet the work went on, souls were saved and added to the church ; God gave these men seals to their ministry and souls for their hire, a sure sign that he had called them to the work. The good work went on, though not very rapidly, but the seed was being sown and it was taking deep root ; the labourers were sowing in faith, and

were looking forward to reaping a plentiful harvest, and in this they were not disappointed. The difficulties with which they had to contend were very great. Missionaries when they return from India tell us that their greatest difficulty is with caste. The same might be said of most rural districts where the Established Church has had undisputed sway for many generations past; and if any one dared to join the poor despised Methodists they were looked upon as mentally deranged, and being frequently deprived of their situations, and put to numerous inconveniences through their employers being Churchmen. As soon as they got possession of the chapel Mr. William Creighton and Mr. Wm. Pattinson (who is now in Australia) conceived the idea of commencing a Sunday school in the large room under the chapel. These two good men were no doubt directed by the good Spirit of God, as the Sunday school has been the most fruitful source from which the society has been supplied. Had the society depended solely upon the Methodists who came into the place to reside, and the conversions which took place among the adult congregation, the society would still have been very small. But a Sunday school was commenced, and though it had a very small beginning (only one scholar), there are many who rejoice and praise God that ever he put it into the hearts of these noble men to establish such an institution, and none more than the writer. These God-fearing men laboured on both in the society & Sunday school under many disadvantages and amidst much persecution; but God was with them owning and blessing their labours; souls were saved and added to the church; many times of refreshing had they from the presence of the Lord. Again and again

was the spirit of the Lord poured out from on high. The cry was often heard "men and brethren what must I do to be saved;" and truly there was a cry of a king in their camp, God in very deed came down in their midst. I have been told by the venerable father of Mr. William Creighton, who is still alive and a bright ornament to the Christian profession, and who was converted to God, as also was his wife, through the instrumentality of their son, that there was only one Sunday evening during a whole winter on which there were no souls saved; every Sabbath evening (except one) some poor sinner found the Saviour, and was made happy in his love. And he added "Those were glorious times, times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." I can imagine how their hearts would be lifted up when God visited them in this manner, having had some experience in these matters. Yes, they were glad; theirs was not a niggardly religion; they were anxious that others should taste the joys of salvation, and be partakers of the same blessings of the gospel of peace. Their earnest desire and prayer to God was that souls might be saved, and God heard their prayers and answered them; and there was joy amongst them, as well as amongst the angels of God over sinners repenting and turning to God. And if all the people who are now living which were converted at Ambleside through the agencies employed by the Methodists during those years were all joined to the society at that place now, we should be surprised at the number. But other places reap the benefit, by far the greater part of them have removed to various parts of England, others to distant lands; and no doubt all of them are wielding an influence for good in the various places where they are located;—many

of them preaching the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Up to the year eighteen hundred and sixty two we have nothing different or of very great importance to relate, things went on in the whole as we have just described them. The following is a list taken from the minutes of conference of the ministers who have travelled in the Kendal circuit and who visited Ambleside once a month to preach and administer the sacrament, and meet the classes for the renewal of their quarterly tickets, &c.:—

- 1848. Rev. John Lewis 1st, and Rev. Edward Baylis.
- 1849. Rev. John Lewis 1st, and Rev. Thomas Ridgby.
- 1850. Rev. John Lewis 1st, and Rev. John Longdon.
- 1851. Rev. Jonathan Barrowclough and Rev. William Foster.
- 1852. Rev. Jonathan Barrowclough and Rev. William Foster.
- 1853. Rev. Peter Williamson and Rev. John Livingstone.
- 1854. Rev. Thomas M. Rodham and Rev. James Chalmers.
- 1855. Rev. Thomas M. Rodham and Rev. James Chalmers.
- 1856. Rev. Thomas Armson and Rev. Peter Prescott.
- 1857. Rev. Thomas Armson and Rev. Jabez Iredale.
- 1858. Rev. Thomas Armson and Rev. Joseph Brown.
- 1859. Rev. Joseph Lowthian and Rev. Robert S. Coe.
- 1860. Rev. Matthew Giles and Rev. Robert S. Coe.

1861. Rev. Matthew Giles and Rev. Henry Douthwaite.

During the interval between the years above mentioned the Sunday school was very much neglected; the chapel was burdened with debt; the members were poor and not very enterprising; and they had lost a willing helper, as William Creighton had removed into Lancashire. A great portion of the school-room was taken and laid to the adjoining cottages, so that it might increase the income, and so be able to raise the money they had to pay as interest on borrowed money. This course was taken much to the detriment of the work of God. Things got to such a state that the children had to be taught in a room about six yards square. We do not wish to attach any blame to the parties concerned when we say that we think other ways might have been taken to raise the money, had more faith been exercised in Him who hath said "The gold and the silver are mine." But along with faith there needs effort, for it is an old and true adage "That God helps those who help themselves." Perhaps there was a little of both wanting. Happy is the thought that this state of things was not of long continuance, for the Conference of eighteen hundred and sixty-two appointed the Rev. Henry Marchbank as Home Missionary Minister in the Lake district, the circuit promising to raise thirty pounds, which has since been raised to forty pounds, towards the stipend, the Home Missionary Committee finding the remainder. This was quite a new era in the history of Methodism in Ambleside. Mr. Marchbank resided one week at Ambleside and one at Bowness. The other ministers of the circuit were the Rev. Matthew Giles, superintendent, and the Rev. Henry Douth-

waite. The aspect of affairs soon began to change, the members began to hold up their heads, and to look a little more hopeful into the future. Indeed they began to think they were somebody when they had got a minister of their own. A minister being stationed at Ambleside had also a beneficial effect outside, the people in general looked more favourably upon Methodism, and not a few were inclined to go to the chapel on that account. Mr. Marchbank came to Ambleside in the month of September, eighteen hundred and sixty-two, and he entered upon his work with an earnestness which was very praise-worthy; and which never flagged during the three years that he laboured there. The difficulties with which he had to contend were very great. The Methodists never having had a minister to reside among them, it was some time before they could settle themselves down to be governed by one man, and especially one so inexperienced, this being his first circuit. His preaching was sound and practical, his favourite subject being Christian consistancy, which he not only insisted on in the pulpit but carried out in his every day life. He was a hard working Methodist preacher, indeed we may say that he worked the hardest of any of the ministers who have succeeded him, and was the means of doing the most good, all things being considered. His was the work of breaking up the fallow ground and sowing the seed, thus preparing the way for those who succeeded him, who reaped the fruit of his labours.

At the Conference of eighteen hundred and sixty-three the Revs. Samuel Atkinson, William H. Toplis, with the Rev. Henry Marchbank were appointed the Ministers of the Kendal circuit.

Under the able and practical preaching of these ministers the good which began to show itself in the previous year now began to develop itself more and more. The congregation kept increasing; strangers who had never been in the chapel before began to show themselves in the evening. These visible signs of outward prosperity were hailed by the society as tokens of good; they looked upon them as sure signs of yet greater good; and the desire of their hearts was granted. Now and again God visited them with showers of blessing, the result of which was that several cast in their lot with them. The Sunday school also began to show fresh signs of life and vitality; fresh scholars kept coming week by week, until the united cry of both teachers and scholars was "Give us a place that we may dwell, for the place is become to strait for us."—And to meet the wants of the school the children had to be taught in the chapel, which, like every other chapel is very inconvenient for a Sunday school. But the work thus begun was designed to spread and grow.

At the Conference of eighteen hundred and sixty-four the same ministers were appointed to the Kendal circuit. Mr. Atkinson entered upon this year determined to carry out a scheme that he had formed, namely, to liquidate the debts on the then two chapels in the Lake district; the chapel at Ambleside being burdened with a debt of three hundred pounds, and the chapel at Bowness with one hundred and fifty pounds. The chapel at Ambleside being in want of some repairs Mr. Atkinson was determined on raising five hundred pounds. This scheme was first intimated to the society at Ambleside at their annual tea meeting of eighted hundred and sixty-four. Mr. Atkinson

referred to it in something like the following words: He had thought much about these two chapel debts, and he was going to try what he could to extinguish them. He intended to write to the Rev. W. M. Punshon, who had established a fund for the erection of chapels in watering places, to see if he could not get a grant towards this object. This announcement was received with a loud burst of applause. These chapel debts had been a great hinderance to the work of God in those places; and many who were present at that meeting lifted up their hearts in devout thankfulness to God that he had sent them a man who would grapple with these debts. As intimated Mr. Atkinson wrote to Mr. Punshon and received the gratifying reply that a grant of one hundred pounds could be obtained on the following condition: That the remaining four hundred was raised in twelve months. Thus encouraged Mr. Atkinson began the work of collecting in right good earnest, and it was no very easy task to raise such a sum, the circuit generally being poor, and especially the places where the chapels were located; but he was bent on his object, and to its accomplishment he devoted all his energies. Many gross insults had he to take from various parties as he, in company with Mr. Marchbank, and sometimes with Mr. Robinson, of Rydal, went to all parties in and out of Ambleside, irrespective of creed. Mr. Atkinson was most indefatigable in this work, and he had the pleasure of seeing his efforts crowned with success; for three months before the time stipulated by Mr Punshon, he had succeeded in obtaining the four hundred pounds, which with the grant of one hundred, completed the scheme, much to the delight and comfort of the societies connected

with the two chapels; and none was more gratified than he himself; and great praise is due to him for the manner in which he began, continued, and brought it to such a successful issue the work he so willingly undertook. The rents of the two cottages underneath the chapel at Ambleside, which used to go for interest on borrowed money is now paid to the Quarter Board for the support of the ministers, which, together with the subscriptions from the classes and the quarterly collection, makes a considerable sum for that object.

In the beginning of the year eighteen hundred and sixty-four the teachers of the Sunday school began to feel seriously anxious about the young men connected with the school. They were at a very dangerous age, and they were unconverted, and if not laid hold of and persuaded to give their hearts to God, they might be lost for ever to the church. The world was bidding fair for their services by its temptations and allurements. To win these young men for Christ was the uppermost thought of their teachers. Many an earnest prayer did they offer on their behalf, and they never let an opportunity slip of impressing upon their minds the importance of personal dedication to Christ. The writer can never forget the many earnest appeals that were given by the teachers in the address at the closing of the school in the afternoon: with tears streaming down their cheeks they would speak to the young men and tell them that they could not live for ever; very soon they would have to go the way of all flesh; and when they were dead and gone who would rise up and take their places? who was so likely as the young men that they had taught, trained, wept and prayed for. Should the school be closed after the present staff of teachers

were dead for want of suitable men to carry it on. The writer is free to confess that these kind of appeals always went to his heart and drew from him the answer yes! we are the most likely. Oh! that we had more heart-stirring appeals in our Sunday School addresses now-a-days—more of this appealing to the heart and conscience—greater and more blessed results would be seen. Every time the teachers met the young men they invited them to begin and meet in class. But they had one objection; and that was they would have to speak. Well do I remember promising with one or two more that we would go with them on the following Sunday. But as soon as the Sunday School was closed we took to our heels and ran towards home, and when we looked back we saw one who had a great interest in us waving his hand to us to come back again. Though they were defeated that time they did not give up, but during the following week prevailed upon us to accompany them on the following Sunday, as it was the Monthly Prayer Meeting, and they would not have to speak. On the following Sunday we went to the meeting according to promise, and never will the writer forget the reception we met with on entering the vestry. Old David as we used to call him, father of Mr. William Creighton, exclaimed at the top of his voice with arms uplifted, "Glory be to God!" the lads have come at last. The meeting began—two engaged in prayer—then the leader asked the same two to give their experience, then the young men were asked the same question in turn, and each had to answer. Then all went to prayer again, and each of the young men were asked to engage in prayer, which request they complied with; and more than one of them date their conversion from

that time. It was that blessed Sabbath afternoon that God spoke peace to their souls—that they felt their sins were forgiven—and they could sing:—

My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear,
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear:
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba Father, cry!

And the language of those young men now is, after nine years experience,

O happy day that that fix'd my choice
On thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.

The leader referred to used to say that the teachers of those young men set a trap for them, and they used to bait it with faith and prayer * If any of my readers are employed in Sunday School work, and are complaining of want of success, we would say "go and do thou likewise." We have entered more fully into this subject for two reasons:—First to show that the kind of teachers that were connected with the Sunday School at Ambleside were earnest faithful labourers. Secondly:—We hope by its recital to encourage those who are engaged in the same noble work to greater activity. The conversion of these young men to Christ was hailed with delight by the society at large. The Sunday School needed a reinforcement of new blood to carry it on more successfully, and an addition of three or four young men who were burning with a desire to do good, was a valuable help. The enlargement of the school became a matter of necessity, and "it must be enlarged" was the cry of all. But there were difficulties in the way. The room adjoining the school-room could not be had unless the teachers

would guarantee to pay an annual rental of thirty shillings, and the writer remembers being the first to sign a document as a kind of guarantee. It was a kind of boon time when the partition had to be taken down. The teachers came up to a man to assist to take it down; and right thankful were they when they had nearly as much again room for teaching purposes. The Rev. Henry Marchbank being the first minister stationed at Ambleside, the society determined to present him with some mark of their admiration, respect, and love; so, previous to his removal, he was presented with a neat time-piece as a memorial of their esteem and affection. At the conference of eighteen hundred and sixty-five, the Revs. Samuel Atkinson, Walter Briscoe, and James Crabtree, were the stationed Ministers for the Kendal Circuit—Mr. Briscoe succeeding Mr. Marchbank at Ambleside, who resided altogether at the place, being a married man. This arrangement was a great advantage to Ambleside, as Mr. Briscoe was an excellent visitor and a very good preacher. If he saw a stranger at chapel on Sunday he was sure to enquire who they were, and go and visit them during the week. The week evening preaching was held once a fortnight, instead of once a week, so that he had more time for visiting. Under the effective preaching of these ministers, and the attention paid to pastoral visitation by Mr. Briscoe, the congregation was much increased and accessions to the ranks of the church were numerous. The enlarged school-room was very soon found to be inconveniently small—more room we must have—more room was again the repeated cry of the teachers. The same difficulties presented themselves as before. But the teachers guaranteed to pay an additional twenty shillings for rent, and

another room was added to the school, which made it considerably larger. They also got another room, but it was left as a kind of class-room for the young men. So with the exception of this partition they have as much room for teaching purposes as ever they had. But all these additions were not sufficient to meet the requirements of the school, as the number of scholars kept increasing until they were compelled to take the infants into the chapel to teach. The number of scholars at this time was near two hundred and thirty, which was the largest number in any school in the town. This position was not obtained without hard labour, and they did not reach it without difficulty, for it aroused the jealousy of their opponents, for as far as scholars were concerned, if the Methodists had not the majority they were on the high road to it, though the Established Church had two schools. But amidst much persecution and opposition they kept close to their work, and the Lord prospered the work of their hands and established it. The only change of Ministers at the Conference of eighteen hundred and sixty-six was in the Superintendent. The Rev. John Walker being appointed to succeed the Rev. S. Atkinson. He was a man in every way qualified for the office, He was a holy man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and his only aim was the building up of the church and the conversion of sinners. His preaching was faithful and pointed, and had the effect under the blessing of God of accomplishing the above ends; but his useful labours were soon cut short by death. He was only permitted to labour in the circuit eighteen months, for on March 16th, eighteen hundred and sixty-eight, he passed to his reward—answering the questions of his friends by saying. “It will be a blessed Change.” “Jesus is Precious.”

"I am on the Rock." Thus he died as he had lived, relying on the atonement, and departed to be with Christ which is far better. This was a sudden and a severe blow to the circuit at large, for all had learned to respect and love him. During the year eighteen hundred and sixty-six, Mr. William Creighton came again to reside at Ambleside in somewhat feeble health, having been subject to fits for fifteen years. He had been for several years in Lancashire, where God had owned and blessed his labours. He attended all the services of the Sanctuary, but was forbidden to preach or do anything that would excite him by his medical adviser, as excitement brought on the fits. On Sunday September 7th, eighteen hundred and sixty-six, a Local Preacher from Burneside was appointed to preach at Ambleside. It was remarked to Mr. Creighton at the Prayer Meeting in the morning; that they thought, (as the weather was so rough,) that the preacher would not come. He replied that he would never see that pulpit empty. So the preacher not having turned up, he conducted the service, taking for his text, Acts eleventh chapter, and the twenty-third ver. "Who when he came and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with full purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." A divine influence rested upon the congregation. The word spoken came with power. The solemnity of the service will never be forgotten. He was at the school in the afternoon and conducted a service at Edinburgh (a small place just out of Ambleside) at five o'clock. He also led the prayer meeting after the public service in the chapel, one of the Sunday school teachers having conducted the service. And many who looked upon him as they left the chapel re-

marked upon the heavenly smile which rested upon his countenance. When he arrived at home in the evening he appeared to be unwell, and could not take his supper as usual; he exclaimed "get on to your knees and let us pray," so he conducted the evening devotions at the family altar. Afterwards he retired to rest, but had not been there above an hour, when he had a fit, and very soon after another one, and when he came round he said I must get up. His wife said to him I am afraid you have killed yourself, as she had often said to him before. When he exclaimed "have better faith." I had better wear out than rust out. The Lord will take care of thee and the children. He got up between two and three o'clock, went down stairs and lighted the fire, then laid himself down upon three chairs and had another fit, and fell off the chairs. His wife thought she heard a noise and went down stairs, and by the light of the fire could see that he was lying on his face; she turned him over and felt his pulse, but his spirit had taken its everlasting flight. His father, mother, and brother came down stairs, but all was over. At the request of his wife I insert the following verse:—

He laboured here awhile,
But now to heaven is gone;
To see his blessed Saviour
And learn the angels' song.

We can imagine how this would go like a dagger to her heart. She was a widow, her children were fatherless. But of the future happiness of her husband she had no doubt—he was ripe and ready like a shock of corn for the garner, and to him sudden death would be sudden glory. He had often expressed a wish that he might enter heaven in full sail—as he used to express it. This desire

was granted. The society at Ambleside was almost panic struck when they heard of his death. Truly, a Princee had fallen in Israel. On the following Wednesday his remains were interred in St. Mary's Church-yard, Ambleside, there to rest until he should hear the trump of the Archangel sound, and he should receive the reward the Saviour will give to all them that have loved and feared him. His death was improved by the Rev. Walter Briscoe in the Wesleyan Chapel, Ambleside, when it was stated that the deceased had preached in that place of worship as often as eleven times in one quarter. Many in that congregation prayed that they might be baptized for the dead,—that they might be animated by the same love to the Saviour,—to live and work like he had done,—and at the end

Their body with their charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live.

As we write we pray that the Lord may raise up a noble army of such men to carry on the work, evangelising, blessing, and converting the world. It is now over six years since this good man entered into rest, who truly was one of Nature's noblemen; yet no marble slab marks the place where his remains lie to tell those who may visit the church yard that there rests the remains of a man who was the principal instrument of bringing about a spiritual reformation in Ambleside. But we hope to see a suitable monument erected to his memory before long. Many who are not worthy to be kept in remembrance are entombed in marble; but many who are first, shall be last; and the last first. The Wesleyan Society at Ambleside, could easily perform this duty if they were to set about it, and thus render honour to whom honour is due. The Rev. Walter Briscoe was laid aside by sickness

for a few weeks, and his place was ably supplied by the Rev. Thomas W. Johnstone, a young man on the President's list of reserve. Mr. Johnstone was a preacher of great promise. His preaching had the right ring about it. And had he come to Ambleside as successor to Mr. Briscoe, as was his intention at first to do, he would, doubtless, under the effectual blessing of God, have been the means of doing a great amount of good. Whit-Thursday, of eighteen hundred and sixty-seven, was a red-letter day in the history of the Wesleyan Sunday School at Ambleside. The writer having made the acquaintance of Robert Barlow Brown, Esquire, of Farnworth, near Bolton, that gentleman made, through him, an offer to the teachers, that if they would give a treat to the children, sometime during the summer, he would bear half the expense. The writer encouraged by this noble offer, made it known to the teachers, and it was decided to have a treat and procession on Whit-Thursday, on that day the scholars and teachers, amounting to two hundred and fifty, walked through the streets of Ambleside (which was quite a novelty) and sang at intervals, which had a wonderfull effect upon the inhabitants. The field on that occasion was one near the church. Both teachers and scholars enjoyed that day as they had never done before. The festival has been kept up every year since, and is now established as an annual affair; and it is looked forward to by the children with great pleasure. And lately Mr. Townson, of the Salutation Hotel, has kindly lent them a field for the day. Nothing of importance has occurred in the History of Methodism in Ambleside of late years. The Sunday school teachers have kept close to their work; now and again God has visited them, and

several of the young people who have been trained in the school have decided for Ohrist, and are promising to be very useful members of society. There are six society classes with about seventy members in, and two hundred and ten chiidren in the sunday school, taught by twenty-five devoted teachers. A tract society has been lately formed. The town is divided out into districts. The young people supply the inhabitants with suitable tracts for the times, which is likely to be productive of great good. The following is a list of the ministers who have traveled in the Kendal circuit from eighteen hundred and sixty-seven, up to the year eighteen hundred and seventy-three.

1867.—Reverends John Walker, James Crabtree and William G. Beardmore. Mr. Beardmore being stationed at Ambleside.

1868.—Reverends William R. C. Cockill, James Morrison, and Cornelious Wood. Mr. Morrison being stationed at Ambleside.

1869.—Reverends Tilney Rising, James Morrison Cornelious Wood.

1870.—Reverends Tilney Rising John Burden, Thomas Nicholson Mr. Burden being stationed at Ambleside.

1871.—Reverends Tilney Rising, John Burdon, Thomas Nicholson.

1872.—Revrendes William Talbot, Thomas T. Mac.Cartney, Fredrick F. Naylor. Mr. Mac.Cartney being stationed at Ambleside.

There is a glorious future for Methodism in Ambleside. Her career in the past has been glorious. Great inroads have been made into the devil's ranks. Scores of souls have been converted, and are now among the blood-washed throng in heaven, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb,—“unto him that

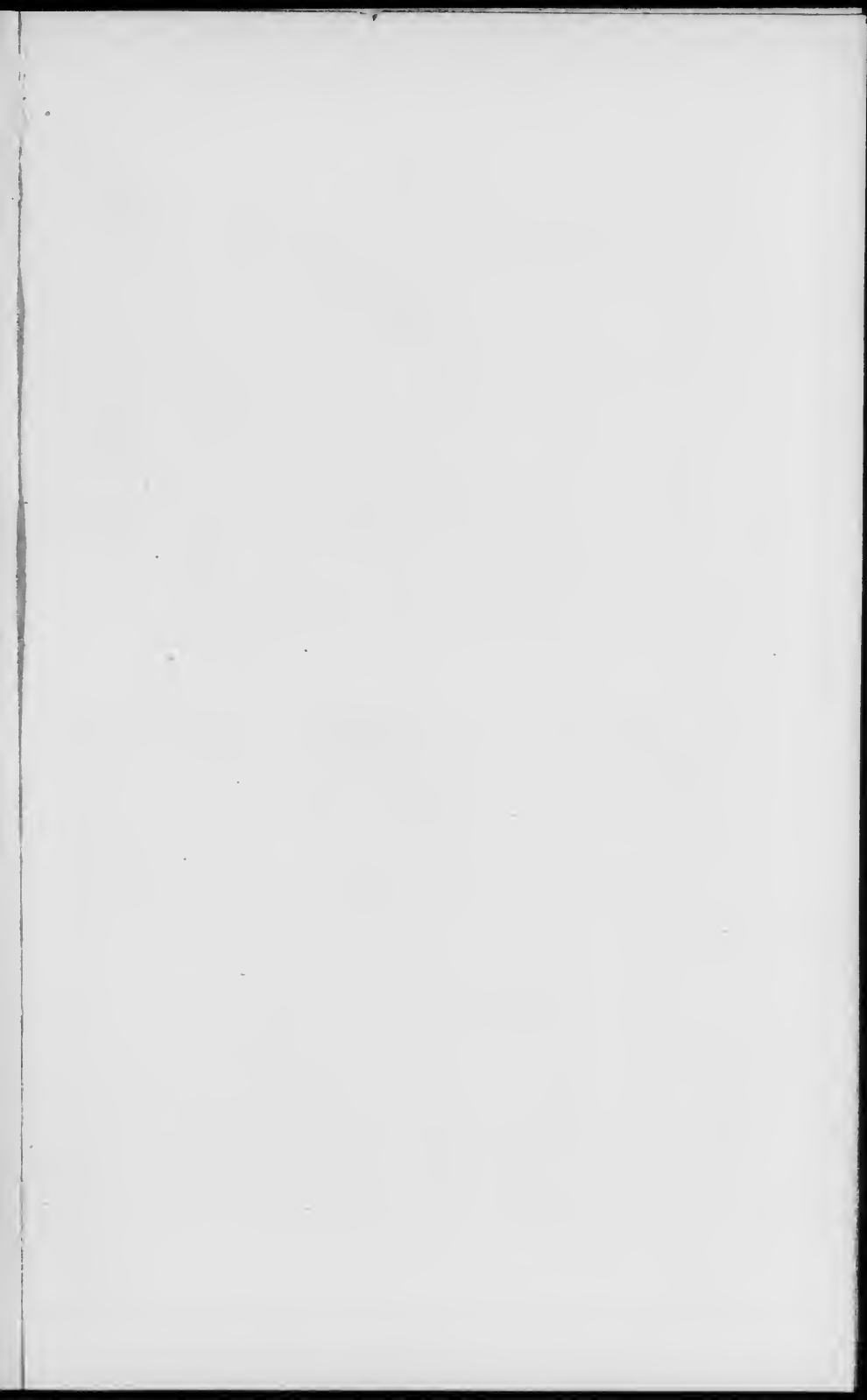
hath loved us, and washed us from our sins"; who to all appearance would not have been there if it had not been for Methodism. But the future may be, and ought to be, still more glorious. Greater and more blessed results should be seen—more numerous the trophies that are won for Christ. And to the accomplishing of this we ought to devote all our powers both of body and mind. Our motto ought to be unity of object, unity of feeling, unity of effort. Let the Spirit of unity and love pervade all and it will come to pass. As methodists we have nothing to be ashamed of except our own shortcomings and unfaithfulness. We belong to the greatest protestant church under heaven. A church that has been the most aggressive for a century back; and to day is the most liberal and doing the most for the conversion of the heathen. A church that is the most effective in discipline and has the purest Theology. We have not to go to Priests, Bishops, Popes, or Creeds, for our Theology, but we go to the fountain at once, even to the New Testament Scriptures,—It is true that we cannot boast of Antiquity, but we can boast of some noble worthies whose names will be handed down and held in veneration by generations yet unborn:—such as Wesley, Benson, Clarke, Coke, Bradburn, Bramwell, Smith, Stoner, Bunting, Newton, Hunt, Hannah, and Vasey, amongst our ministers; and Hick, Nelson, Dawson, and Richardson, amongst our local preachers; and a host of others who were not a wit behind the very chiefest of the ministers of Christ: men of faith, men of power, men of prayer, men who wrought wonders in their day: men who received remarkable answers to prayer. If the present generation of Methodists would but

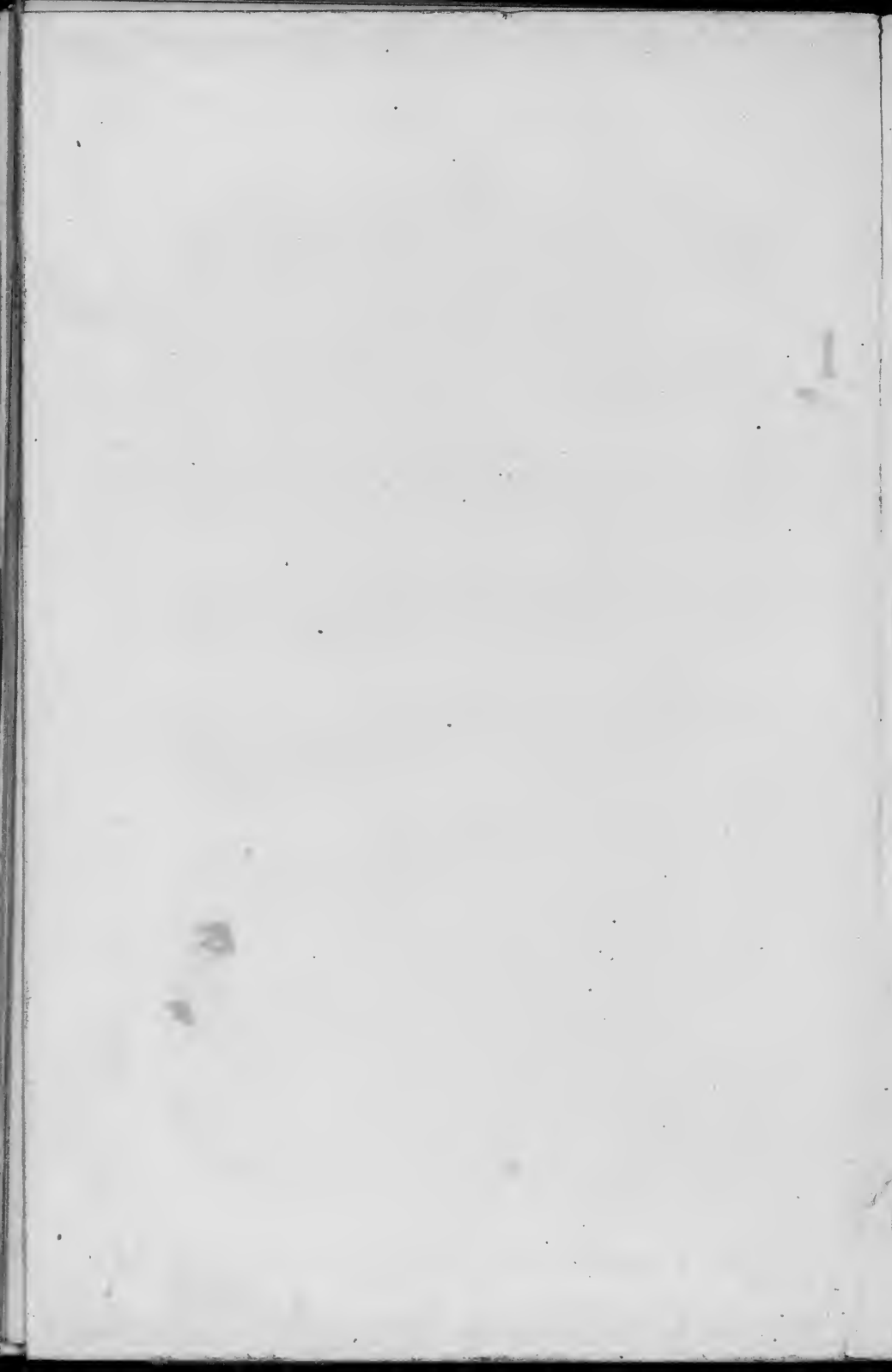
strive to catch the same spirit that animated them, be actuated by the same holy motives, work as they did, exercise as strong a faith in the glorious promises of God as they did, then we as a connection would see equal results. Oh that we may be baptised for the dead! Oh that we may give God no rest until he makes us a praise in the earth; until he does in such a manner as he has never done before, pour out his spirit upon us, and revive his work. Oh that we may all consecrate ourselves afresh to him! Offer ourselves up to God as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, unto God: which is but our reasonable service.

Take my soul and body's powers,
Take my memory, mind, and will;
All my goods, and all my hours,
All I know, and all I feel;
All I think, or speak, or do,
Take my heart, but make it new.

May we all go forth with renewed vigour, and fresh determinations to achieve still greater victories. Let our ambition be to save souls,—“For he that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, saves a soul from death, and hides a multitude of sins.” And they that be wise shall shine as the firmament, but they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.

O that the world might taste and see,
The riches of his grace;
The arms of love that compass me,
Would all mankind embrace,
His only righteousness I shew,
His saving truth proclaim;
Tis all my business here below,
To cry behold the Lamb.
Happy if with my latest breath,
I may but gasp his name;
Preach him to all and cry in death,
Behold! behold! the Lamb,





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a de P. K. G. H. L. m.
no h. q. n. d. l. u. f. w. J. y. g.